



The Arlington Advocate



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High school event promotes unity

BY CHRIS RICHARDS
CORRESPONDENT

Janice Jackson led a spirited discussion Jan. 27 on multiculturalism at Arlington High School, which hit upon issues of people's differences and similarities.

"How will they be prepared to live in the 21st century? We have to prepare hand, head, and heart for the human good," she said.

The event, which included Jackson's talk "Knowing ourselves so that we may better understand others," was a way for members of the high school community to come together. Organizers hoped the discussion and potluck dinner would foster a sense of unity and allow attendees to celebrate their differences.

While there is the sociological issue of multiculturalism on the surface, Jackson knows that there are certain psychological traits inherent in every human which play a bigger role. Displaying a picture which could be looked at many different ways, some people saw a duck, while others saw a rabbit, and the speaker said, "People go to war over whether this is a duck or a rabbit."

Alluding to all the eternal battles which rage over interpretations of religious texts, Jackson addressed the sticky nature of the subject. Nothing is simply black or white anymore, and once it leaves the realm of the intellect and enters the emotions, then everything changes, she said.

"These discussions are not easy to have, so I encourage there to be more dialogue," she added.

Actively inviting the audience to form groups and offer personal heritages and identities to one another, Jackson highlighted the innumerable backgrounds. Afterward, the speaker collected the submissions and read aloud everything from "Italian-American" to "widowed" to "adopted," and all those who fit the description were invited to rise. In doing so the participants bore witness to the psychological process one undergoes when they have to acknowledge who and what they are.

"How did it feel when you had to stand up with a whole group of people? And how did it feel when you had to stand up all by yourself?" Jackson asked everyone.

Reaction to these questions ranged from comfort to isolation, and one student replied that he felt "unique." Diversity is a fact of



Sean Garballey, a ninth grader and Vision 2020 member, chats with Gail Jacobson, peer mediation coordinator at Arlington High School, during the diversity dinner at the high school Jan. 27. After the dinner, Janice Jackson presented a talk entitled "Knowing ourselves so that we may better understand others."

life, and there are no two humans alike. Well, that used to be true, Jackson said.

"We are now cloning animals, which leads to the cloning of humans. How will we prepare our children to deal with these ethical issues? If it's not planned, don't assume it's going to happen," she said.

With the endless talk these days of the Internet and technology, Jackson has a careful eye fixed on the future and she sees things which makes her a little uneasy. "You can chat with people and you don't even have to look at them."

This will strike a nerve with those in love with their chat rooms, but what will humans become when verbal communication becomes muted and muffled if we continually communicate via keyboard? Jackson knows this will become a problem if it hasn't turned into one already.

Technology may not necessarily be the answer for the human good and Jackson aspires to prepare the youth of America for what lie ahead. The parents and leaders of today will be held accountable for the way in which future generations behave, "so stand tall, because the work that you do today is powerful."



Fariba Piroozmandi of the Diversity Task Force enjoys herself at the event.

Debt exclusion \$34.5 million

BY DAN SHOHL
STAFF WRITER

The debt exclusion scheduled for April 1 finally has a dollar figure attached to it — \$34.5 million.

The campaign in favor of a four-school reconstruction plan kicked off Jan. 26 with a packed rally at Sons of Italy on Prentiss Road. The campaign, called Rebuild Arlington's Neighborhood Schools, has put together its pitch, which would be used to renovate or rebuild four Arlington elementary schools, the Peirce, Dallin, Stratton, and Thompson schools.

The four-school spending plan will be put to the voters at an April 1 election.

If voters approve the debt exclusion, the state School Building Assistance Bureau will cover \$21.7 million of the cost, leaving \$12.8 million to Arlington taxpayers.

Organizers have calculated the tax effect on the owner of an average one-family and two-family

■ SEE DEBT EXCLUSION, PAGE 5

Cellucci's plan could affect school projects

BY LES G. MASTERSON
STAFF WRITER

Gov. Paul Cellucci's recent proposal to overhaul the School Building Assistance program sent shock waves through communities looking to renovate and replace existing schools, including Arlington, which is faced with a debt exclusion vote in April.

The vote would fund four elementary school projects and is the latest in the rehabilitation of the Arlington schools. But Cellucci's announcement sent many scurrying to find out the exact wording of the proposal.

Two weeks later, no one knows for sure what this change would mean.

■ SEE SCHOOL, PAGE 5

Mugar proposing office buildings for Rte. 2 parcel

BY DAN SHOHL
STAFF WRITER

Boston-based developer Mugar Enterprises' is proceeding with plans to develop a 16-acre parcel of open land in East Arlington along Route 2, according to town Planning Director Alan McClen-

nen. On Monday, company representatives presented a brief overview of their plans to Town Manager Donald Marquis and McClenen at Town Hall. The company is proposing the construction of two five-story office buildings, each one providing 150,000 square feet of space. Access to the site would be

from Route 2 and would require permission from Massachusetts Highway Department.

Any proposed development for the land, owned by the developer, can also expect opposition from East Arlington residents. The politically-active East Arlington Good Neighbor Committee is currently organizing a campaign to block construction on the land, asserting that any project would harm an environmentally sensitive area.

"It looks like it's going to be a fight," said Elsie Fiore, a member of the committee and a longtime opponent of previous projects at the site. "It's something that I

■ SEE MUGAR, PAGE 10

Forfeits place AHS basketball's tourney chances in jeopardy

School officials unknowingly let fifth-year transfer student play on football, hoop teams

BY DAN SHOHL
STAFF WRITER

Arlington High School did not know one of its seniors could not play until it was too late.

Unknown to both the student and the school, a senior on this year's football and basketball teams is ineligible to play because he is in his fifth year, according to AHS Principal Charles McCarthy. The principal declined to specify the student, citing school administration confidentiality rules.

It will mean that both teams will have to forfeit

winning games in which the young man played this year, jeopardizing the basketball team's chance to make a post-season tournament.

The student arrived at AHS as a junior, having transferred through several school districts. The student's record was initially reviewed when he transferred to AHS.

"That mistake falls on my shoulders," said McCarthy. "Upon an initial review of the transcript, it was not obvious he was in his fifth year."

The student played football at AHS this school year and had been a member of the basketball team,

whose season is still underway. A fifth-year senior is ineligible to play interscholastic sports without first obtaining a waiver. According to McCarthy, the student did not know he was ineligible.

"He did nothing wrong in this case," he said. "There was no chicanery on his part."

The principal said he discovered the eligibility problem on Jan. 27, as he was reviewing the senior's transcript to make sure he had received the academic credit he earned at previous schools when he transferred to AHS.

"He's a solid student," said McCarthy. "We just

wanted to make sure he was not short-changed."

Carl DeMatteo, the school's athletic director, said he shared the blame with McCarthy for not noting the discrepancy. Reviewing the transcripts of transfer students is a responsibility he said he shares with the principal.

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, the MIAA, oversees high school athletics and set eligibility rules for players. While fifth-year seniors may request a waiver to play before a season starts, they may not retroactively apply for a waiver after the games have been played, said McCarthy.

The eligibility problem means that the football and basketball teams will have to revise their win-

■ SEE FORFEIT, PAGE 10

GOOD LUCK DEBBIE



STAFF PHOTO BY MARC VASCONCELLOS

Outgoing Recreation Director Debbie Hayes gets a hug from her sister, Jeannie Wall, at Hayes' goodbye party last week at Town Hall.

Sparks fly over Peirce Field lights

BY DAN SHOHL
STAFF WRITER

The project to light the football field behind Arlington High School is temporarily on hold.

A spirited discussion was sparked at the Monday's Board of Selectmen meeting, when Paul McKenna of the Arlington Youth Alliance, asked why Town Manager Donald Marquis had not convened a meeting with citizens about the lights as delays began to crop up.

Selectman Diane Mahon criticized Marquis, saying that the manager had not been keeping her informed, as the board's liaison on the light project, about the status of its construction. She said that the manager had not honored her recent request to gather a

meeting of town officials and citizens to discuss the project.

"Every indication was given to me that there was not a delay," she said.

Marquis said the project was "80 percent complete," and said it should be finished this spring, as an unspecified issue arose that forced the project to halt.

"The lights are part of a much bigger plan behind the high school," he said. "The lights will be up at the appropriate time."

Mahon and Selectman Charles Lyons argued about the project. Lyons said Mahon was trying to inappropriately "micro-manage" the project. Mahon said she had been trying to simply get updates about the project.

The lighting project started rolling early last summer, when

state Sen. Robert Havern, D-Arlington, announced that he had managed to steer \$225,000 in state transportation money to fund the project to light the football field.

Work did not begin with that announcement, though, as Marquis and Lyons sought assurance from the state Department of Transportation that it would commit to funding a project that had little to do with transportation.

The exchange of letters between Town Hall and the state prompted a protest at an Oct. 18 selectmen's meeting, when several local sports groups, including Arlington Youth Alliance and Arlington Pop Warner Football, picketed Town Hall and accused Marquis and Lyons of trying to

■ SEE PEIRCE, PAGE 10

INSIDE

communityclassifieds.com

Q. What should I do with my 401(k) if I leave my job?

A. See Ask the Experts in this week's Communityclassifieds.com section.

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FOR THE RECORD

POLICE LOG

Selections from the Arlington police log for the week of Jan. 24-30:

Monday, Jan. 24

- At 10:13 a.m., the Act of Love adoption agency, 734 Massachusetts Ave., reported a broken window pane.
- At 7:31 p.m., a car owner on Tanager Street reported that his passenger-side window had been broken on his parked car sometime that afternoon. Nothing was reported missing.
- At 11:23 p.m., a Wollaston Avenue resident reported that the rear driver's side window had been smashed on a 1996 Chevrolet Impala.

Tuesday, Jan. 25

- At 7:23 a.m., a woman on Crescent Hill Avenue reported that the right rear window on her 1997 Dodge van had been broken. Nothing was reported missing.
- At 7:26 p.m., a Hillside Avenue resident reported an attempted break-in on the driver's side door of a 1999 Chevrolet.
- At 7:53 p.m., a Coolidge Road resident reported a break-in of his 1995 Jeep. A set of binoculars was reported missing.
- At 9:18 p.m., police received a report of damage to the rear of Brackett School, 66 Eastern Ave., from a thrown snowball.
- At 9:18 p.m., police received a report of three car break-ins on Appleton Street. The three cars were unlocked and their insides ransacked. The man making the

report did not note anything reported missing.

Wednesday, Jan. 26

- At 10:58 a.m., a man reported the theft of a cell phone from his mother's car parked near the intersection of Sunnyside Avenue and Gardner Street. There was no sign of forced entry.
- At 2:39 p.m., a woman on Appleton Street reported a car break-in. The report did not specify if anything were stolen, but it did note that the doors were unlocked.
- At 3 p.m., police received a report of car tires slashed on Edith Street.

Thursday, Jan. 27

- At 9:22 a.m., a Hillside Avenue resident reported a car break-in and the theft of personal items. The doors were unlocked, and among other things the thieves reportedly stole a Club anti-theft device.
- At 3:39 p.m., a woman on Fremont Street reported receiving telephone threats from her estranged boyfriend's current girlfriend.

Friday, Jan. 28

- At 9:26 p.m., police responded to a report of a fight at Café Barada, 201 Massachusetts Ave., between two men in which one

reportedly punched the other in the face. No arrests resulted.

Saturday, Jan. 29

- At 10:37 a.m., police investigated a reported break-in that occurred the previous night at Jade Garden, 1360 Massachusetts Ave. Store owners reported the theft of approximately \$300 in cash, a \$500 CD player, a backpack, and a \$300 fax machine.
- At 7:43 a.m., the owner of a 1998 Chevrolet truck reported the vehicle stolen while parked with the keys in the ignition at the Getty service station, 295 Massachusetts Ave.

ARRESTS

The following is the arrest log for Arlington's police department for the week of Jan. 24-31.

Tuesday, Jan. 25

- At 10:27 p.m., police arrested James M. Larkin, 29, of 12 Fremont St. after a traffic stop on Fremont Street. Larkin, according to the police arrest report, reportedly failed to yield in front of a police cruiser as he turned from Gardner Street to Fremont Street. He was stopped and placed under arrest for allegedly failing to yield to an approaching vehicle and driving with a suspended license. The arresting officer was Officer Michael Flynn.

Saturday, Jan. 29

- At 3:30 a.m., police arrested Richard J. Fitzgerald, 65, of 39 Shawshen Road in Bedford. Fitzgerald was arrested after he stopped his car at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Mystic Street following an investigation of a rear end accident. He allegedly hit a stopped motorist at the streetlight. Investigating officers gave Fitzgerald three sobriety tests, after which they arrested him for allegedly driving while intoxicated and following too closely. The arresting officer was Officer Dennis Corbett.
- At 2 p.m., police arrested Robert V. Assarian, 29, of 215

Broadway. Assarian's wife had traveled to the Community Safety Building, 112 Mystic St., to report that her husband had beaten her with his hands, feet, and a hammer during an argument the day before at their home. She had apparently suffered bruises and other injuries to her head, shoulder and leg. Arlington police sought and received an emergency restraining order against Assarian and called him to the station, where he was placed under arrest and charged with assault and battery and assault with a dangerous weapon. The arresting officer was Officer Joseph Dunn.

FIRE LOG

From the incident reports from Arlington's fire department for the week of Jan. 17-23. References in this digest to "paramedics" denote two-medical teams from Armstrong Ambulance Services, a private Arlington-based ambulance company.

Monday, Jan. 24

- At 1:25 p.m., firefighters were sent to a Davis Avenue home for a fire. The fire apparently started when the homeowner, working on a living-room pipe, accidentally ignited a curtain with a floodlight. He worked to put out the blaze with a garden hose before calling the fire department. The fire was out within 20 minutes after the crews arrived, having scorched the living-room walls, ceiling, and windows. Damage is estimated at \$5,000 and there were no injuries.

- At 3:30 p.m., firefighters were sent to the corner of Mill and Bacon streets to put out a car fire. The car, a 1986 Alpha Romeo, suffered \$500 in damage from a fire that started beneath the drivers seat. There were no injuries.

- At 3:43 p.m., firefighters, town EMTs, paramedics, and EMTs from Armstrong Ambulance Services were sent to the intersection of Park and Oakland avenues for a two-car accident with five reported injuries. Arlington fire transported two patients to Mt. Auburn Hospital in Cambridge. They were an 11-year-old girl complaining of head

and knee pain and her mother, a 39-year-old woman complaining of a headache.

- At 5:45 p.m., firefighters were sent to a two-family house on Pine Street do help with a major flooding problem. A second-floor pipe apparently burst from the cold, flooding all the floors below. Firefighters shut down all utilities service and worked to pump out the water. Damage is estimated at \$20,000.

- At 7:51 p.m., firefighters were sent to a Colonial Village Drive apartment for a stove fire. The tenant had already put out the fire by the time crews arrived. The department ventilated the apartment. Damage was estimated at \$1,000.

Thursday, Jan. 27

- At 6:59 p.m., firefighters, EMTs, and rescue crews from Armstrong Ambulance Services were sent to Massachusetts Avenue near Arlington High School for a three-car accident with four injuries. Three passengers, all 14-year-old girls, were taken to Winchester Hospital after complaining of head and neck pain. A fourth person was taken by Armstrong to an unspecified hospital.

Saturday, Jan. 29

- At 7:26 p.m., firefighters were sent to a Gardner Street apartment to put out a fire that began in a kitchen wastebasket and spread to a wall. The tenant had put out the flames before the firefighters arrived. Damage is estimated at \$500.

MEETINGS

Thursday, Feb. 3

- Arlington's Conservation Commission meets at 7:30 p.m. in the second-floor meeting room of the Town Hall annex, 21 Academy St.

Sunday, Feb. 6

- Noise Abatement Study Committee meets at 7:30 p.m. at 65 Woodside Lane.

Monday, Feb. 7

- Arlington's Finance Committee meets every Monday and Wednesday through March at 7:30 p.m. in the second-floor conference room of Community Safety Building, 112 Mystic St.

Tuesday, Feb. 8

- Arlington's School Committee holds several specialized meetings of its subcommittees. At 6:30 p.m., the subcommittee on curriculum, instruction and assessment will meet, followed at

7:15 p.m. by the group on specialized student services, and at 8 p.m. a meeting of the full School Committee. All will take place at the sixth-floor hearing room of Arlington High School, 869 Massachusetts Ave.

- Minuteman Regional School Committee holds its annual public budget hearing at 7:30 p.m. in the library of Minuteman Regional High School, 758 Marrett Road in Lexington.

- Zoning Board of Appeals meets at 7:45 p.m. in the conference room of the Department of Public Works, 51 Grove St.

- Vision 2020's Environmental Task Group takes up Spy Pond for discussion at 8 p.m. in the first-floor meeting room of the Town Hall annex.

- Arlington Arts Council meets at 7:30 p.m. at Jefferson Cutter House, 1

Whittemore Place in Arlington Center.

- Arlington's Park and Recreation Commission meets at 7:30 p.m. at the Whittemore Robbins House.

Wednesday, Feb. 9

- Arlington's Finance Committee meets every Monday and Wednesday through March at 7:30 p.m. in the second-floor conference room of Community Safety Building.

- Arlington School Committee's community relations subcommittee meets at 8 p.m. in the sixth-floor hearing room in Arlington High School.

- Vision 2020 Standing Committee meets at 8 p.m. in the second-floor meeting room of the Town Hall annex.

- Open Space Committee meets at 7:30 p.m. in the first-floor meeting room of the Town Hall annex.

Heritage Fair takes a look at many cultures

On Saturday, March 25, the Millennium Celebration Committee and the Robbins Library Children's Department, through a Russell Fund sponsorship, will host a Heritage Fair, celebrating the richness of Arlington's many cultures. The fair will take place in Town Hall and the Children's Room and Community Room of the Robbins Library, between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

At the library, Arlington's cultures will be represented through an afternoon of storytelling, hands-on crafts, and cultural displays. Snacks will be provided.

At Town Hall, throughout the day, the auditorium will be filled with the sights

and sounds of local performers showcasing their talents. Foods representing the multi-cultural tapestry of Arlington's residents will be available, as well as exhibits and crafts of the many diverse cultures of our community.

If you would like to share a favorite family dish, prepare an exhibit or craft from your native country or culture, or lend a hand in helping on the day of the event for a few hours, please contact Sheri Baron at 646-0656 /sbaron@mediaone.net, or Judi Paradis at 316-3234/ BOBCANDJUDIP@compuserve.com. Admission to the Heritage Fair is free.

THE ARLINGTON ADVOCATE

(USIS 031-900)

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If you have a news story idea, a letter to the editor, obituary, a question about news coverage, or to submit an arts, education or a social news item, contact Les Masterson the editor for The Arlington Advocate.

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TOWN ONLINE POLITICS

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SEN. JOHN KERRY: TOWN ONLINE NETCAST



Town Online airs the Community Newspaper Co. interview of U.S. Sen. John Kerry. Watch the interview or listen to it with the

RealPlayer, available for download off Town Online. Come join in our bulletin board discussion or write a letter to Town Online or to the senator. To see the Kerry interview, go to www.townonline.com/kerry.

GET CONNECTED

Free web sites for local groups are available through the Community Connections program at Community Newspaper Company.

Churches, marching bands and sports teams have used this program to join the World Wide Web.

Interested? Contact Deirdre O'Leary by e-mail at doleary@cnc.com or check out the program at www.townonline/community/registration.html

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Landscaping business owner builds on bikeway's right of way

MBTA exploring license

BY DAN SHOHL
STAFF WRITER

No one disputes the fact that Dante Muzzioli built on land he does not own.

The 44-year-old Belmont resident recently bought a piece of property at 24 Ryder St., with a building that snugs up against the north side of the Minuteman bike trail. His intent is to expand a landscaping business he has operated for 24 years, D. Muzzioli Associates, to a new location in Arlington. He said he expects to start his new operation this spring.

Two months ago, Muzzioli began to clean and clear the land behind his building. He said he removed heaps of trash and graffiti behind it. He also removed trees and several tons of dirt to build a parking area for his employees, and therein lies the rub.

"I certainly would not have done anything to disturb the surroundings," he said Wednesday. "I had planned to enhance the building."

The problem was that he had expanded into Minuteman's right-of-way, public property owned by Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. The bike trail sits on an old rail-bed that is licensed to the town of Arlington, which is responsible for maintaining and policing the path. Muzzioli, who said he thought he was working on his own property, did not notify the town nor the MBTA before he started his work.

The excavation does not cut into the bike trail

itself, but does cut into the earthen embankment on the north side.

On Jan. 3, the work was brought to the attention of town Planning Director Alan McClellenn, who went to the site for a look. Believing that it was not on private land, he said he asked the town Building Inspector Michael Byrne to give it a look.

After talking with Byrne and conducting his own research, McClellenn determined that Muzzioli had built on public property.

"It was an honest mistake," said Muzzioli. "[McClellenn] told me not to do any more work back there."

Muzzioli did, however, do a bit more, constructing a cinder-block retaining wall to keep his excavation from eroding while he awaited a decision about the land. He also asserted the planning director initially suggested the town might consider working out a solution that would permit Muzzioli to remain in the right-of-way, an assertion McClellenn flatly denied.

Having determined that the construction was an encroachment, on Jan. 14 McClellenn wrote to the MBTA asking that it take corrective action.

"The town considers this to be an egregious encroachment of MBTA property and totally inconsistent with the values that the town and the state have developed for the Minuteman Bikeway," McClellenn wrote to the MBTA. "I request that you move immediately to remove this encroachment and cause Mr. Muzzioli to replace the fill and replant the trees that he removed."

"My position is very clear," said McClellenn. "The town of Arlington has a license on that right-of-way. This action is a violation of that license."

The MBTA, for its part, said it was looking into Muzzioli's work, holding out the possibility that some sort of arrangement might be reached whereby the business would be allowed to remain.

"Of course we're concerned when someone begins working on our property without letting us know," said Joe Pesaturo, a spokesman for the MBTA. "The business owner was cooperative with our request to stop work until this is resolved."

The MBTA is looking at a deal that would allow Muzzioli to keep what he has built on the bikeway. Pesaturo said the authority is reviewing the option of issuing Muzzioli a license to use the land. Such a license would give the MBTA the option to revoke its permission and require that the business owner return the right-of-way to the state 30 days after the revocation.

"It won't be a lease," he said. "It will be a license for the property."

While a license is still under review, Pesaturo said the authority would not permit major construction.

"A permanent structure ... won't be allowed," he said. "In addition to the internal review of this, we certainly will consider what the community has to say. If there are some strenuous objections within the community to this, we will certainly take at a long hard look at that before we approach the business owner about a license for the property."

Muzzioli also spoke with Town Manager Donald Marquis and Selectman Jack Hurd.

On Monday, Marquis said that he had instructed Muzzioli to do nothing further to the property until the town and the MBTA had a chance to discuss it.

Hurd began talking with the landscaper to explore the possibility of allowing him to remain on

the bikeway embankment in exchange for some service to the town, such as maintaining nearby Buck Field. For several months, Hurd has been trying to develop a plan to attract private money to help maintain Arlington's playing fields.

"Mr. Hurd or Mr. Marquis never promised that [an agreement] was pressed in concrete," said Muzzioli. "It was just an intention to work with me and that's all I was looking for."

"There are a number of businesses on that bike path," said Muzzioli. "If they were willing to enhance an area and do some community projects as I'm willing to do, how could that be anything but a benefit to the town?"

"I just want a piece of land for parking cars," he said. "I really need the endorsement of the town."

On Monday, the Board of Selectmen voted to inform the MBTA that the town wanted to be a part of discussions on land use changes for MBTA land in Arlington.

McClellenn said that last year's changes in the way the authority gets funded have placed a great deal of pressure on its managers to find new sources of revenue.

"There is an incredible incentive on the part of the T administration to license and lease property that they own," he said. "They have been under pressure to dispose of assets that are not producing. That is an ominous sign for things like bikeways and railroad rights of way in Metropolitan Boston."

Pesaturo said Tuesday it would probably be at least several weeks before the MBTA's various departments had a chance to review the license proposal for Muzzioli.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Family Concert

Taproot, a wonderfully harmonic group of local women, presents a concert for families at the Robbins Library on Sunday, Feb. 6 at 3 p.m. Taproot brings together the musical talents of Rebecca Brown, Anne Goodwin, Gail Rundlett, and Deborah Silverstein for a blend of traditional, contemporary, and original music. Taproot first performed at the Robbins Library at the children's Planet Earth Fair in March 1999, and was so well received that the library staff has been hoping to have them return ever since. This concert, which is funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, provides an opportunity for more Arlington families to share in their delightful and engaging music. For more information about this program, please call 316-3234.

Lecture rescheduled

The free lecture by author Sven Birkerts, part of the town's Millennium Lecture Series, will take place at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, at the Town Hall auditorium, 730 Massachusetts Ave. It was cancelled last month because of snow.

A Peirce Valentine

The Peirce School PTO will hold an "I Love You" story hour to celebrate Valentine's Day on Friday, Feb. 11 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the school auditorium. In particular, preschool children and their parents are invited to come and hear some stories, make a craft and share a snack. While visiting the school with their children, parents are invited to take a tour of Peirce School and see preliminary plans for the new building that are being developed by the DRA architectural firm. The school auditorium can be entered through the parking lot on Newland Rd. The PTO hopes that parents of young children in Arlington will take this opportunity to see the need for a new Peirce building and the exciting plans being proposed. The Peirce School PTO offers a series of after school story and craft hours throughout the year. Readers include parents, teachers, community members, and students. Children are invited to stay after stories and make a simple, seasonal craft. For additional information about this event, please call 646-3976.

Hardy School Art

An exhibit of artwork from fifth grade students at the Hardy School is on display at the Fox Branch Library through Feb. 15. This artwork, created with teacher Sandy Goodman, uses line and shapes to create texture and value. Hardy students, families, and friends are invited to stop by the library, located at 175 Mass. Ave. to enjoy this colorful and thoughtful art. For more information, please call 316-3198.



STAFF PHOTO BY TYSON TRISH

Come Together — Peirce School families listen as Haave Walters gives a speech during the school's Metco night last Friday. Walters, a Peirce School graduate, is attending Salem State College and spoke to the school about his experiences as a Metco student in Arlington.

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THE STORK REPORT

A son, Brian Edward Holowitz, was born on Friday September 17, 1999 to Hillary Wright-Holowitz and Anthony Holowitz of Arlington at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. Grandparents are Dr. Alan and Marie Wright of Arlington and Jack and Nancy Holowitz of Springfield. Brian joins his older brothers John, 7, and Matthew, 3.

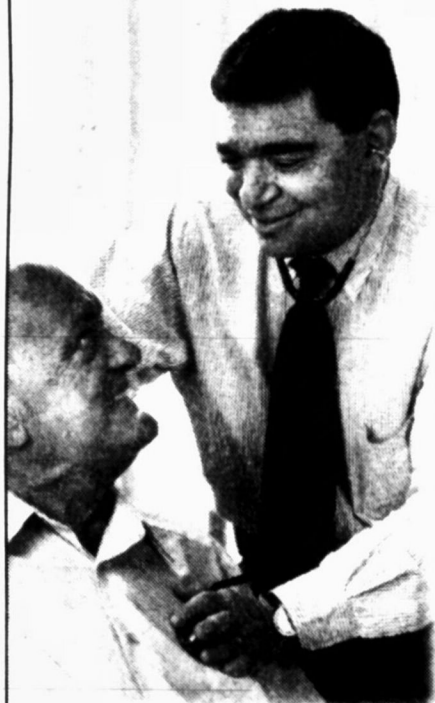
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Little interest shown in upcoming election

With only a week left for candidates to take out nomination papers, the Town Clerk's office is quiet.

No one has taken out papers for town-wide office in weeks. Town Clerk Corinne Rainville said Wednesday that some wait until the last minute to take out papers.

The following residents have taken out nomination papers for the April 1 election:

George Plandes

Housing Authority
• Freeland Abbott

Board of Assessors
• Kevin Feeley

• Incumbents

Here is a list of dates for residents:
• Monday, Feb. 7 — Last day for Town Meeting members who are candidates for reelection to give written notice that they are running.
• Thursday, Feb. 10 — Last day for obtaining blank nomination papers.
• Monday, Feb. 14 — Last day for submitting all nomination papers to the registrars of voters for certification of signatures.
• Monday, Feb. 28 — Last day for filing nomination papers with the town clerk.

Board of Selectmen
• Jack Hurd
• Kathleen Kiely Dias

School Committee
• Dennis Sullivan
• David McKenna

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COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER COMPANY

Pleasant St. proposal put on back burner

Developer investigating more palatable options

BY DAN SHOHL
STAFF WRITER

A proposal for new construction in the Pleasant Street historic district has been put on hold for two months to allow the developer to investigate alternatives to his current, controversial plan.

Arlington's Historic District Commission had planned to hear a formal application from developer Michael Collins at the commission's Jan. 27 meeting. Collins recently purchased a 120-year-old house at 105 Pleasant Street, within a historic district, and has submitted plans that would add a second house to the property.

The plan filed with the HDC called for the construction of a new, two-family house in front of the home formerly owned by Arlington pediatrician, Dr. Otto Nau. The plan received a chilly informal reception from the HDC raising the ire of neighbors, who said a new building would obscure the historic home and degrade the continuity of an historic neighborhood.

Instead of Collins, Arlington attorney Robert Annese arrived to ask the board to postpone the hearing. Annese said he had been recently retained by Collins, and said he would be investigating ways to redevelop the property in a manner more palatable to the residents and the commission.

"We're talking in terms of adding on an addition," said Annese. "I would like to do it ... without the additional building."

He asked for a continuance of the hearing to give him time to work, and the HDC granted his request.

"With any luck at all, we'll be able to do something that satisfies everybody," he said.

The plan for a new home built close to Pleasant Street had been frowned upon by the HDC, which has the power to regulate the set-back of buildings to the street.

"My very strong sense is you can't do this in a historic district," said John Worden, an HDC commissioner.

Worden said Tuesday that it is rare for an applicant and the commission to find themselves at such loggerheads.

"This [proposal] has been different, and it's not because we haven't been clear about what we expect," he said.

He added that he thought the idea of an addition would be better, particularly if it were made to an already incongruous part of the house that was not part of the original construction.

"An addition that brought that into stylistic [harmony] would be a welcome change," he said.

On Tuesday, Collins added he still preferred an earlier plan he had put together for the commission's review, a plan that would move the house closer to Pleasant Street and building a new multi-family house behind it.

"I really strongly feel good about our original proposal," he said. "We looked really hard at this before we presented it."

Having said that, Collins said that he would await his attorney's investigation into alternatives that would sit easier with the neighbors and the HDC.

"[Annese] wants to make sure that ... we're looking at the full constellation of possibilities before we get into an adversarial relationship, and I agree with him," he said.

Collins' application will be revisited by the HDC at the commission's March 23 meeting.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN NOTES

From Monday night's meeting of the Board of Selectmen in Town Hall, with board members Charles Lyons, Jack Hurd, Diane Mahon, and Kevin Greeley in attendance.

- Dr. Michael Foley of the Lahey at Arlington (formerly Symmes Hospital) medical staff presented a check from the medical center's doctors to Arlington Council on Aging. The \$5,000 gift will go to two COA programs, one that helps pay for Arlington seniors' trips to medical appointments, another that pays for personal emergency pagers that allow the wearer to instantly signal rescuers about a medical problem.
- Planning Director Alan McClellenn reported on the amount of money Arlington should expect from the federal Community Development Block Grant program. For the next fiscal year, the town will receive \$1.465 million, or \$1,000 less than the current year. A subcommittee of the Board of Selectmen will review current CDBG projects on Feb. 28, and hold a hearing of proposals for next year on March 13.
- The board went into executive session for the stated purpose of discussing the purchase of real estate, as there will be five measures before Town Meeting that consider a public acquisition of land. After coming out of executive session, the board voted to request \$20,000 from the town Finance Committee to appraise four pieces of property: 30 Water St., 16 acres of land in East Arlington abutting Route 2 and owned by the Mugar family, the land occupied by Lahey at Arlington on Hospital Road, and a private home at the corner of Blossom Street and Newland Road abutting Peirce Elementary School.
- The selectmen voted several appointments and re-appointments, including 19 elections workers for the year 2000; Anne LaCourt to Arlington Arts Council; John Bowler to Board of Youth Services; and Bernice Jones and Joseph Keefe Jr. to Parks and Recreation Commission.

— Compiled by Staff Writer Dan Shohl

Democrats hold caucus

Democrats will hold their caucus at noon Saturday, Feb. 5 at the Community Safety Building. Thirty-five delegates and eight alternates, divided equally between male and female candidates, will be elected to the Massachusetts Democratic Convention that will be held June 3 in Lowell.

The caucus is open to all registered Democrats in Arlington. Those registered Democrats unable to attend may be considered for Delegate and Alternate by two-thirds of those present and voting. Those not elected as Delegate and Alternate may apply to be add-on delegates in the following categories: youth, minority and disabled.

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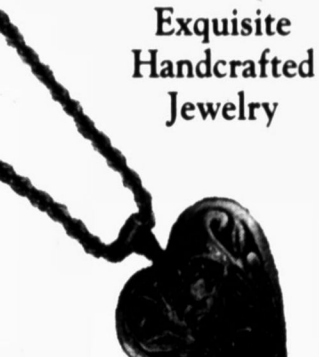
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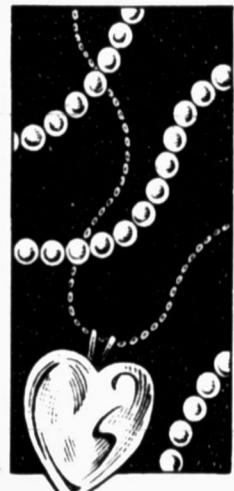
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Impact unclear on school project changes

■ **SCHOOL**, FROM PAGE 1

"The next two projects [Peirce and Dallin] will be at 63 percent, which is all but certain," said state Rep. Jim Marzilli. "But the other two [Thompson and Stratton] are up in the air."

Cellucci's proposal would change the formula for state reimbursement, eliminate the 90 percent reimbursement for "racially imbalanced" districts, provide financial incentives to prevent open space from being used for school construction, promote renovating existing schools, and provide funding for small projects. Currently, the state reimburses projects only if they are comprehensive in nature.

Under the proposed formula, each community would begin with a base reimbursement of 38 percent, but could add "incentive points" through maintenance and by seeking alternatives to new school building. A community's per capita income and property wealth would also be factored into additional state aid.

"The huge emphasis on building new schools has a detrimental effect on a lot of communities,"

said Lt. Gov. Jane Swift, who added that some towns feel fiscal pressure to abandon old school buildings because the state offers more help for new schools.

Currently, the average statewide reimbursement is 69 percent, which will say the same; Arlington's is 63 percent. Marzilli does not think a future school project will be affected by any reimbursement change. He is more concerned about school projects not being approved by the state because of changed criteria.

Arlington's other state representative, Anne Paulsen, said she understands Cellucci's concerns, but disagrees with parts of the plan. Paulsen said there is a provision to develop "stock building plans," which would establish plans for communities to mirror. Paulsen is concerned about the schools' appearance if that ends up in the final plan.

"I understand the concern that the state does not have endless amounts of money, but there needs to be a partnership between the state and communities," she said, adding that the program has

helped countless communities.

Marzilli does see a number of benefits, including rehabilitating schools and reimbursing minor repairs, instead of building new schools.

"It's useful for towns to minimize construction, but it's not good if it is forced upon communities," Marzilli said.

According to Marzilli, the plan also eliminates communities lumping skating rinks and fields houses into school projects.

"That's an appropriate change to make. We don't live with an unlimited amount of money to spend. Arlington has been responsible... Some communities have gone whole hog. But that should not be an excuse to throw the baby out with the bath water," he said.

Though he sees benefits, Marzilli added that Massachusetts is ranked 49th in the nation on capital spending of schools.

"We have bad schools," he said of the commonwealth.

Sen. Bob Havern is not sure why this was even proposed.

"There is nothing wrong with the current process. I don't see

any Taj Mahals being built out there," Havern said.

Havern added that Cellucci's plan will most likely look much different after the House and Senate get their hands on the proposal.

"[Arlington schools are] on the list, but the rules could change. That's what we're trying to avoid. The ones on the list don't want to change their proposals," he said.

Though there is concern, Marzilli is confident Arlington will not be adversely affected.

"There are enough legislators like Anne Paulsen and me working so that the state will not cut back any future construction of public schools. The fact is that Massachusetts is at the bottom of the heap in the nation; we can't afford any further cutting," he said.

Steve LeBlanc contributed to this report.

Dining updates

The Chateau, 645 Mass. Ave., is serving grilled pizza in one size, with your choice of various toppings. \$5.50 to \$9. Call (781) 643-7200.

Food & Thought



ANNI-MARIE SOLTZER

Gala Ristorante, 138 Mass. Ave., has a new menu. February is pasta specials month; average price is \$12.95. Catering is available for corporate and private functions. Call (781) 646-1404.

Toraya Japanese Restaurant, formerly Tsunami, has opened at 890 Mass. Ave. Call (781) 641-7477.

More Valentine's Day news

The Chateau, 645 Mass. Ave., will serve its regular menu, plus specials. Call ahead seating will be available. Call (781) 643-7200.

Flora, 190 Mass. Ave., will offer a special a la carte menu from Friday evening through Monday evening. Reservations accepted for any size party, all four evenings. Special Monday hours: 5:30 to 10 p.m. Call (781) 641-1664.

Gala Ristorante, 138 Mass. Ave., will serve the regular menu and a fixed price menu with three entree selections: lamb chops, beef tenderloin, and "lazy" lobster. There will be roses for the women and a champagne toast. Reservations accepted. Call (781) 646-1404.

Annie-Marie Soltzer is a regular Advocate contributor.

Push for debt exclusion starts

■ **DEBT EXCLUSION**, FROM PAGE 1

home, calculated at \$212,600 and \$236,700 respectively. Passing the debt-exclusion question will mean an extra \$63 per year to the property taxes of the single-family homeowner, \$70 to the two-family.

If passed, the rebuilt schools would, among other things, increase class space, add specialized computer rooms, reconfigure common areas like cafeterias and auditoriums, upgrade aging building systems, and bring the buildings into line with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

"We can't afford to wait," said school Superintendent Kathleen Donovan.

"When Peirce School was built

75 years ago, 85 percent of the people living in Arlington were farmers, engaged in agriculture," she said. "Times have changed."

The last debt exclusion for school construction occurred in March 1998, when voters approved \$23 million for the Brackett, Bishop and Hardy schools by a hefty majority. During that campaign, the proponents said the remaining four elementary schools would soon be brought to a vote as well.

"We are all here joined in one cause ... and in my opinion to keep a promise made two years ago to Arlington voters," said Greeley.

"The voters spoke, and we lis-

tened," said Donovan. "We are mid-way through this commitment."

Parents from every school district in town attended the Wednesday kick-off. Organizers expect to bring on hundreds of volunteers, assigned to each of Arlington's 21 precincts, to ring doorbells, drop off flyers, raise money, and carry the weight of the campaign.

The Rebuild effort is headed by three people: Charles Foskett, chairman of the town's Capital Planning Committee; Denis Sullivan, chairman of Arlington's School Committee; and Edward Starr, who helped run the previous campaign.

Election workers needed for April 1

Arlington Town Hall seeks residents serve as paid election workers for this calendar year.

There are four different job classes to fill. There is a warden, the chief election officer at the polling area who is charged with maintaining an orderly voting process, posting the proper materials, enforcing election laws and preventing interference with the voting process. There is a clerk, who keeps a record of the proceedings as required by law. There are inspectors, who assist voters with balloting, check their names

off the voting rolls as they arrive, and proceed their completed ballots. Then there are relief workers, who fill in as needed throughout a polling day.

Each voting precinct must have a warden, a clerk and four inspectors, plus relief workers as needed. Arlington is divided into 21 precincts.

The next town election will be held on April 1.

Wardens are paid \$100 a day, clerks get \$90 and inspectors receive \$80. Relief workers are paid \$7.50 per hour.

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Annual Valentine's Party:
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LEARNING

SCHOOL NOTES

Forum on curriculum tonight

The second of three educational forums for parents of children attending Arlington public schools — this one focusing on the state-required curriculum known as the "frameworks" — is scheduled for tonight, Thursday, Feb. 3.

The forum, part of the Parent Education Forum Series, 1999-2000, is called "Frameworks Curriculum Panel for Parents and Children, kindergarten through grade 5." It is scheduled for 7 to 9 at the Brackett School.

Arlington public school educators — teachers, principals and administrators — have been busy aligning the kindergarten through-fifth-grade curriculum with new state standards. Come and learn how the curriculum is being developed and adapted in eight content areas (English and language arts, mathematics, social science and history, science and technology engineering, the arts, foreign language and health).

A 40-page booklet outlining the curriculum is expected to be available.

The evening format will start with short presentations by department heads followed by a question-and-answer period. Moderated by Joanne Gurry, assistant superintendent for curriculum.

Math forum reset for Feb. 16

A math forum, postponed because of snow Jan. 13, has been rescheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 16.

"Relearning Arithmetic: The Investigations Curriculum for Parents and Children," for parents of children in kindergarten through fifth grade, will be held at the Ottoson Middle School cafeteria.

This evening, part of the Parent Education Forum Series, 1999-2000, offers a first look at understanding the way math is taught in the Arlington schools. The presenter is Johanne Fleming, math department and teacher trainer, Arlington public schools. Math resource books will also be available for purchase.

Information: Cindy Bouvier, Arlington public schools' health education department (316-3570).

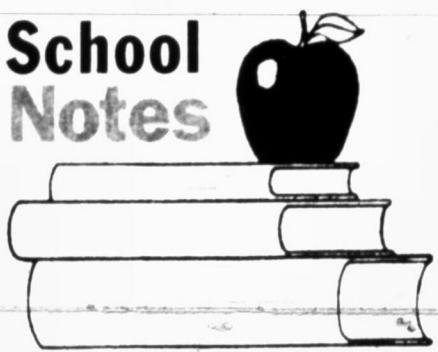
Principal announces retirement

Barbara Fischer Long, principal of the Hardy School since 1985, has announced her retirement, effective Aug. 31.

A search will be undertaken to replace Ms. Long, who has been in the Arlington public-school system since 1970.

A search is under way till the principalship at Stratton School following the death in October of longtime Principal Bernard Walsh. Alan Brown is acting

School Notes



principal.

The Hardy School, along Lake Street, is undergoing renovation, which is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2001.

Ms. Long has postgraduate education from Boston College, Harvard Graduate School of Education and Antioch College.

She holds a certificate in administration from Boston College and a master's degree in education from Antioch. She received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Quincy College, Quincy.

From 1970 to 1985, she was a classroom teacher in Arlington public schools. From 1968 to 1970, she was a classroom teacher in Hgin public schools, Hgin, Ill.

Other Hardy news:

- Be on the look out for the Hardy School Anniversary Bears arriving this week. Notices will be sent out with price information and availability. These bears will make wonderful gifts and a great way to show your Hardy School spirit. The PTO is looking for some volunteers for the absentee line. This does not require a large commitment but does offer a valuable resource for the school. Please contact Lisa Davenport.

Math/science day Feb. 13

The townwide Math and Science Day is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 13, from noon to 4 p.m. at the Arlington Boys and Girls Club.

The Arlington Coalition Parent Involvement Project — known as PIP — is presenting the four-hour event at the club, 60 Pond Lane. The planning committee has selected 35 to 40 hands-on math and science activities geared to children kindergarten through fifth grade and their families.

Come and enjoy many entertaining math and science activities. They include Venn diagrams with sports equipment, "locker math," comparing your body measurements to Barbie and Ken, family structure-building, chromatography and "lemon batteries."

For questions and further information, call Judi Bohn at 316-3573.

Peirce tours, story hours

Would you like to see firsthand why the Peirce School needs to be rebuilt? Take a tour.

Marilyn Flaherty, the principal, is offering tours of the school to anyone from 9 to 10 a.m. Mondays.

Please call the office at 316-3736 to schedule a tour.

Other Peirce news:

- On Friday, Feb. 11, from 3:30 to 4:30 P.M., the Peirce PTO is the host for its monthly story hour and craft. Preschool children and their parents, as well as others, are invited. During and after this event, parents will be able to tour the school and see preliminary architectural plans.

- The Peirce School PTO will hold its monthly meeting on Monday, Feb. 7 at 8:15 a.m. in the room behind the school stage. Items on the agenda include a discussion of the campaign to rebuild Arlington's schools, plans for the upcoming book fair, art show, and auction, and a midyear budget report. All Peirce parents are encouraged to attend.

Parents may sign out tests

Binders of last year's fourth-grade MCAS test are available for Stratton parents and guardians to sign out at the Stratton library. Each binder contains one complete test. Please ask Stratton School librarian Mrs. Pat Buckley for assistance.

Dallin pancake breakfast Feb. 5

The smell of sausage cooking over outside grills is expected to draw many to Dallin's pancake breakfast, Principal Bob Lynch said.

When they show up to the annual event — set for 8 to 11 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 5 — participants will be able to get a full breakfast and, if they want, a look at the school, scheduled to be rebuilt, Lynch said.

There will also be an opportunity to buy books by Usborne, which specializes in detailed non-fiction books for children. Subjects range from science to the humanities. The school will receive "book credit" which will be used to update our library's collection.

If your child is in kindergarten or grades one, three or five, remember to check your child's backpack for his/her grades' requested donation. Donated items may be left in the lobby in the labeled box anytime this week.

Other Dallin news:

- The PTO will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, at the school and hear Superintendent Kay Donovan discuss the planned rebuilding of the Dallin.

- Questions about Ottoson are due in the Dallin office by Tuesday, Feb. 8.

Principal Paul Lamoureux has said he is happy to address all questions.

- The PTO's math/science enrichment committee, with Hampshire Chemical, sponsored a workshop for Dallin teachers on integrating technology into the curriculum.

Kindergarten orientations

The following information is for parents of incoming kindergarteners and new students. Parents will have the opportunity to ask questions about the school's curriculum and activities, as well as meet with teachers and other parents:

BRACKETT:

Orientation meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 12, at 7 p.m., in the cafetorium at the school, 66 Eastern Ave. Further information: 316-3700 (main number) or Robert Penta, principal (316-3705).

BISHOP:

Orientation is set for Thursday, Feb. 17 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Stratton School auditorium, 180 Mountain Ave. Information about registering for the 2000-2001 academic year has been mailed to all children who live in the Bishop School district. If you have not received a packet, call the school office at 641-5407.

DALLIN:

Orientation is set for Thursday, March 2, from 1 to 4, at the school, 185 Florence Ave. Registration packets will be mailed to anyone who the school knows is planning to register. Information: 641-5413.

HARDY:

Orientation is set for Wednesday, Feb. 9, 7 to 8:30 p.m., Room 23, Hardy, 52 Lake St. Any child born in 1995 is eligible to enter kindergarten in 2000-2001. Bring your blue registration form. Speakers will include current kindergarten teachers Mrs. Galluzzo, Mrs. Hoey and Mrs. Sullivan; reading teacher Mrs. Driscoll and Principal Barbara Fischer Long. If you have not received a packet, call 641-5424.

PEIRCE:

Orientation is set for Wednesday, Feb. 9, 6:30 to 8 p.m., Peirce School auditorium, 85 Park Ave. Extension. Guest speakers will be PTO co-chairs Judi Paradis and Vicki Chambers, school nurse Claire Lewkowicz, kindergarten teachers Dail Langley and Laura Forsythe and Marilyn Flaherty, principal. Refreshments will be served. Registration is scheduled for March 2. Further information: 641-5446.

STRATTON:

Kindergarten sign-up and parent orientation is scheduled for Wednesday, March 1. Sign-up opportunities are scheduled from 7:30 to 9 a.m. and from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Parent orientation is

scheduled from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. that day. The orientation will take place in the auditorium. Parents coming to Stratton for kindergarten sign-up should report to the main office of the school, 180 Mountain Ave. Further information: 641-5453.

THOMPSON:

Orientation is set for Wednesday, March 15, from 6:30-8 p.m. at the school, 70 N. Union St. Additional registration from 9 to 11 a.m. March 16. Bring child's birth certificate, Social Security number and proof of Arlington residency (e.g., utility bill, rent receipt, etc.). Snow date March 22 and 23. Children who are 5 by Dec. 31, 2000, are eligible for kindergarten. If you have a child who is eligible and did not receive a registration packet in January, call Mrs. Annis or Principal Michael McCabe at 641-5467.

What's happening at Ottoson?

From the Ottoson Parent Advisory Council (OPAC) newsletter:

- On Friday, Feb. 11, Ottoson students are invited to participate in one of three activities that evening — dance, basketball or a movie — at the school.

- The next OPAC meeting is set for Tuesday, Feb. 8, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., at the school. The School Council will meet on the same day, from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Bishop marks 50th year

In recognition of the 50th-anniversary year of the Bishop School, the school community is marking the occasion all year by recognizing children and staff birthdays each month, planning a recognition assembly on April 27 at the Stratton School auditorium and by selling bears.

The PTO is sponsoring the sale of a Bishop Bear, a plush, soft toy. To order, send a \$10 check (made payable to Bishop School PTO) to Bishop School PTO, c/o Stratton School, 180 Mountain Ave., Arlington 02474. Information: 641-5407.

School news

One way to tell the public news about your school is to tell Bob Sprague, communication specialist for Arlington public schools. E-mail school-related items of interest to bsprague1@rcn.com or call 641-4490. He can also post items on the town's Web site, Arlington Online, at: <http://www.town.arlington.ma.us/>. The site last week reported weather-related delays of Arlington public-school openings — and will report closings when any occur.



Before heading off for a tour of Italy, the Arlington High School Madrigal Singers and Honors Orchestra will perform at the AHS Lowe Auditorium Friday.

Public invited to free AHS concert

On Friday, 8 p.m., in Lowe Auditorium at Arlington High School, the AHS Madrigal Singers and Honors Orchestra will give a farewell concert consisting of pieces they will perform during their upcoming tour of Italy. Admission is free and the public is cordially invited to attend. Choral director Cheryl Hemenway notes that "this is the only time most of this music will be heard in Arlington."

On the program will be both sacred and secular classical music as well as American popular and

folk songs. The Madrigal Singers and Honors Orchestra will collaborate in performing the Agnus Dei and Lacrimosa from the Mozart Requiem, and the orchestra will present the Corelli Sonata in E minor, featuring concert mistress, Anelle Petti. The Madrigal Singers will also offer several songs by Irving Berlin, including "Blue Skies," "What'll I Do," and "Puttin' on the Ritz." Turning to American folk music, the male Madrigal Singers will perform "Shenandoah," and the entire chorus will sing "Poor Wayfarin' Stranger."

The orchestra will continue the folk theme with "Fiddle Music," a compilation of reels and other dance tunes.

Hemenway says that the AHS musicians' new CD will be on sale at the concert. She describes the students, teachers, and parents who will soon be departing for Italy as "getting ready to roll" and states that this concert is "our way of saying thank you to the town of Arlington for its support" of this exciting and unprecedented trip abroad.

— By Carla DeFord

Ottoson, high school musicians selected

Ottoson Middle School and Arlington High School students were selected to participate in the District concert held at Lowell High School.

Five hundred and fifth students from grades six through nine will be performing in the Massachusetts Music Educators Association

Northeast Junior District Festival in March. This program is offered to the students by the M.M.E.A. as an enrichment opportunity providing a musical experience otherwise unavailable. Outstanding music students from over 80 public and private schools participated in the auditions in January. The

students were selected to perform in the Junior District Concert Band, Orchestra, Boys Chorus and Girls Chorus. The students will rehearse with guest conductors and then perform in a concert to be held at Lowell High School in Lowell, MA on Saturday, March 25 at 2:30 p.m.

AHS GUIDANCE NEWS

Arlington Rotary Club Career Luncheon — The Guidance Department and Rotary Club are sponsoring a career luncheon, Wednesday, Feb. 9 in the guidance classroom. Dr. Claude Fontaine and his operating assistants will speak on careers in dentistry and oral surgery. Pizza and soda will be served. Sign up in Main Guidance.

AFL - CIO Scholarship Exam — Exam will be held at 8:15 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 2 in the Guidance Career Center. Study packets available from Mrs. Fischer in Main Guidance.

Financial aid resources — Higher Education Information Center: 1-800-442-1171; Federal Student Aid Center, FAFSA Processing: 1-800-4-FEDAID; College Scholarship Service-Profile Processing: (609) 771-7725. Still more help on the Web: www.finaid.org and www.fast-web.com. Help is available at each college's financial aid office, the high school guidance office and the state legislator's office.

Free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) — Forms are now in the Guidance department or visit them on their website at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

College Link — College Application Software enables students to enter background information once, answer questions and write a single essay to be sent to colleges. Return the data file to the CollegeLink service center, mail in diskette or send the file electronically. Download via the Internet: www.collegelink.com or call 1-800-394-0606. Diskettes are available in the Guidance Department.

Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts have designed a free Internet site for high school students, called MASSmentor. Located at www.massmentor.edu, this student-centered interactive web site helps students plan their courses to meet admissions requirements; provides information on admissions and financial

aid; takes students on virtual campus tours; determines what colleges best meet students' needs; and allows applications over the Internet.

Apply! 2000 — Applications for hundreds of colleges and universities on DC ROM for Windows 95/98 and Macintosh are now available in Main Guidance. **Note: when prompted through Macintosh for AOL, Opt No or Apply 2000 will not function.**

The Guidance Office/Career Center is open daily Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. There are many college information videos and catalogs available to students and parents.

CSS/financial aid profile information available in the main guidance office for seniors.

Common applications and the common application disk version are located in the guidance office. To borrow the disk, students must sign up with Mrs. Fischer.

Open houses/information sessions

New England College, HENRIKER, N.H. — Winter Open House, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 12. Call 1-800-521-7642 for information.

Career in the Arts Day — Emerson Majestic Theatre, 219 Tremont St., Boston, 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 5. For information call (617) 585-0250.

Girls' Leadership Workshop — Free, nine-day, empowerment program seeks outstanding young women in grades 9 and 10, July 8-16. Workshop will be held at the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill in Hyde Park, N.Y. Participants will reside in college dorms with four college graduate counselors and a dorm mom, attend workshops and field trips including day visits to the New York State Capitol and to the United Nations in New York City. \$50; must have own transportation to and from Hyde Park, N.Y. Applications, available from Mrs. Fischer, must be sent by Feb. 29. For information call (914) 229-5302.

Massachusetts Academy of Mathematics and Science at Worcester — Academy Information Night, 7 to 9 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 26, offered to sophomores only, interested in attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute for their junior and senior years. Examination test dates: Feb. 23 and March 25. Applications due April 1. Ms. Fischer has applications and information.

New England Women's Fund presents "A Career in Sports Conference for Young Women" — 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tuesday, March 14 at Northeastern University, Curry Student Center Ballroom. Call (617) 731-5600.

2000 High School Health Careers Program (HSHCP) — July 10, Aug. 4, 2000. The HSHCP is a tuition free, four week residential program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Application deadline is March 1, 2000. Call (877) 395-3149.

Biomedical science careers program for African-American, Hispanic American and Native American students — 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, March 5, 2000 at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel, Boston. Call (617) 432-0552 at the Harvard Medical School to register.

Champlain College (Vt.) — Group information sessions by appointment will be held Saturdays, Feb. 12 and March 18. Call 800-570-5858.

Castleton (Vt.) — Open House Saturday, April 15, 2000. Call 800-639-8521.

Scholarships Combined Jewish Philanthropies — Aid is given in the form of a grant or interest-free loan based on documented financial need. Applications and information can be obtained from Jewish Vocational Service at (617) 451-8147.

Arlington Citizens Scholarship Foundation — Applications available in Main Guidance, official transcript must be requested. Deadline is March 1, 2000.

Arlington Sons of Italy Scholarship — Available in Main Guidance, official transcript required. See Mrs. Fischer for application.

Husbands who won't watch football, ESPN, and Baywatch

Business helps residents with handyman service

BY ANNE-MARIE SELTZER
CORRESPONDENT

Your closet door has been sticking for months and the living room needs a fresh coat of paint. If you don't have the time, the expertise, or the special tools to do these tasks, don't despair. Just pick up the phone, dial 648-5600, and hire a temporary "husband" from Rent-a-Husband in Arlington.

"I'd describe Rent-a-Husband as a handyman service capable of doing a variety of jobs around the house or in a small business," explained Gary Adelson, who co-owns the franchise with Ken Camaioni and Jim Segool. "Typical jobs for us involve painting rooms, kitchen remodeling, hanging shelves, and replacing windows. We have what we call a 'honey do' list, and we like to say, 'If honey doesn't, call us.'"

Rent-a-Husband was established two years ago by Maine resident Kaile Warren. Down on his luck, he went from rags to riches by opening the business. Warren now hosts a local handyman show in Portland, Maine, and appears on CBS Saturday Morning. There are currently 31 Rent-a-Husband offices in the United States and two abroad. The Arlington fran-

chise, which opened at 826 Mass. Ave. in May, was the first one in Massachusetts; a second just opened on the South Shore. The Arlington store serves customers from Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Lexington Somerville, and Winchester.

Using Rent-a-Husband begins with an initial phone call any weekday between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. "We assess the job and estimate the cost," Adelson said. "It may take 10 days from start to finish, depending on the time of year. However, there are variables that can affect our work: weather, employee illness, or something unforeseen associated with the job."

The cost for each "husband" is \$45 per hour. According to Adelson, jobs lasting more than a day are always estimated. Some jobs are labor plus material. Payment is accepted by cash or check, and Adelson prefers to receive payment when the job has been completed.

He added, "We have an off-site workshop and warehouse in Arlington, where we can do custom work and minimize the amount of time spent in the client's house. It's policy that we always leave the house neater than when we came."

All workers are licensed, bonded, and insured, and carry identification. "Having a neat and clean appearance is very important to our founder. He is trying to create a professional image in a field that

didn't have one," he said. "We wear uniforms and have a Rent-a-Husband truck. The trust factor was one reason why we wanted to open our business on Massachusetts Ave. We want people to know that we're not just a phone number. Customers can find us. And we're not just hammers and nails; we have to be good at what we do. Our work is a combination of business ethics and skilled labor."

Adelson supplies references upon request. He is quick to point out that he gives out the numbers of jobs that went smoothly as well as those that had problems. "Most businesses only publicize the good experiences. If there is a problem with a job, we go back and make good. The work is guaranteed for a year," said Adelson. "Every business makes mistakes, but it's how you handle those mistakes that's important."

One key is finding and keeping good help. Said Adelson, "We started out with two husbands in May and got busy right away. We screened people based on their skill level, and looked for those who were tall, dark and handy. During the summer, we used students from Minuteman [Regional High] School, which worked out great for us. Our customers give us feedback, and if a worker gets too many call-backs

because the work is sloppy, we let him go."

Adelson believes that Rent-a-Husband provides a necessary service. "You have people to call for electrical work, roofing, and plumbing," he said. "Who do you call to fix a stuck drawer or move furniture? There is so little time today to get these jobs done. A husband frequently doesn't have the skills to do the job and he'd rather spend his free time with his family."

Why open a business in Arlington? "Ken and I live here, as does Jim's mother. I own real estate and my properties always need something fixed," Adelson said. "Each of us brings a different perspective to the business. I'm the behind-the-scenes man; Ken manages the office and the crews; and Jim has had 38 years' experience as a contractor."

For Adelson and his partners, the greatest challenge is finishing one job on time and getting to the next one on time. "Money is nice, but it's more important to satisfy the customers," he said. "While we love the tongue-in-cheek humor that we can bring to our day, the bottom line is whether the 'husband' did a good job. Customers seem to be pleased with our service; we have a wall of thank you notes to prove it."

Inspections coming to a close

Arlington Assessors Office is wrapping up the first phase of a town-wide, house-by-house inspection of every property in town. Patriot Properties of Peabody has been contracted to conduct those inspections, which usually last between 10 and 15 minutes. Once this phase is completed, the assessors will then begin contacting homeowners throughout Arlington who were not available for the first stop-by. Inspectors will not enter a house without the permission of the homeowner, nor will they enter a house where nobody is home. The following streets are on the inspection schedule for February:

Cornell Street
Damon Park
Dartmouth Street
Decatur Street
Ernest Road
Everett Street
Exeter Street
Fordham Street
Foster Street
Franklin Street
Fremont Street
Gardner Street
Gordon Road
Grafton Street
Grant Park
Hadley Court
Hamlet Street
Harlow Street
Hayes Street
Heath Road
Hilton Street
Jean Road
Lewis Avenue
Marathon Street
Marrigan Street
Mass Avenue
Maynard Street
Medford Street
Michael Street
Mystic Lake Drive
Mystic Street
Mystic Valley Parkway
Newton Road
Norcross Circle

Norcross Street
North Union Street
Orchard Terrace
Oxford Street
Palmer Street
Parallel Street
Park Street
Park St Place
Patrick Street
Phillips Street
Purcell Road
Raleigh Street
Rawson Road
Regis Road
River Street
Sachem Avenue
Sherborn Street
Silk Street
Sunnyside Avenue
Trowbridge Street
Tufts Street
University Road
Waldo Road
Warren Street
Webcowet Road
Webster Street
Wellesley Road
Wheaton Road
Windsor Street
Winter Street
Wyman Street
Yale Road

Source: Arlington Town Assessor's Office

Adams Street
Allen Street
Alton Street
Amherst Street
Amsden Street
Andrew Street
Bates Road
Beacon Street
Belton Street
Bowdoin Street
Broadway
Chestnut Street
Cleveland Street
Coral Street

Gold Star spouse notice

Funds were included in the recently passed FY 2000 state budget to pay an annuity of \$1500 to Gold Star spouses. A Gold Star spouse is a widow or a widower of

a veteran who either died in combat or whose cause of death was service connected. No other veterans' widows or widowers are eligible to receive this annuity.

Commission has opening

There is an opening on the Arlington Human Rights Commission. Interested parties should send a resume and expression of interest to John L. Worden III, 27 Jason St. or fax to (617) 227-8662.

ARTS

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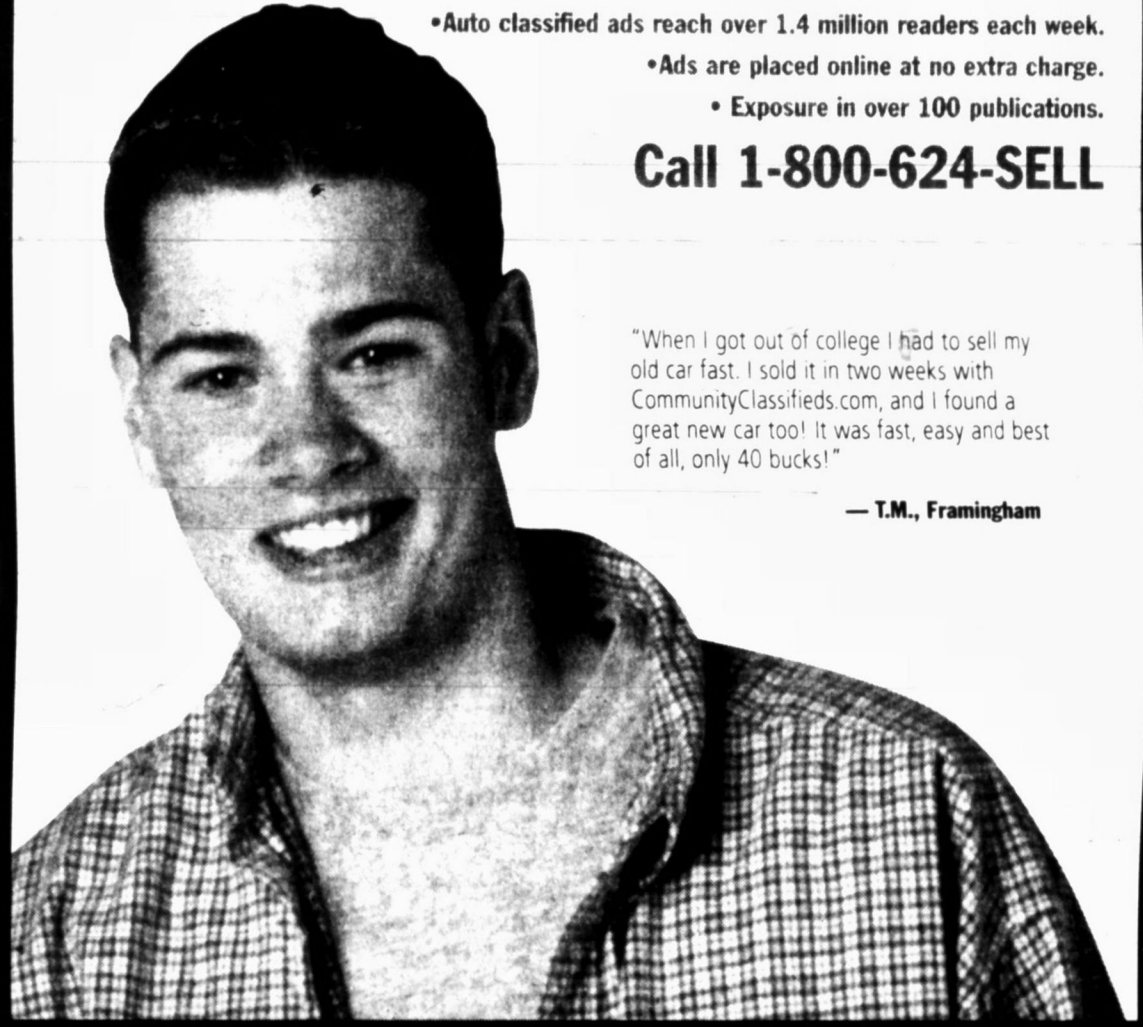
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— T.M., Framingham

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COMMENT

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Birthplace
of "Uncle Sam"Samuel
Wilson

EDITORIAL

Lengthy review,
debate needed

Change is a scary proposition for many people so it comes as no surprise that Selectman Diane Mahon's proposal to review the town manager position was met with some trepidation last week.

Long-time Town Manager Donald Marquis is retiring later this year after spending 33 years as Arlington's top official. Arlington has had a town manager form of government since 1952.

As time has passed, the town has added responsibilities to the position and Marquis has taken these additions in stride.

With his departure, the town has a great opportunity to review the structure and responsibility of the town manager's position. Changing the duties of the town manager — including areas such as the power to make appointments to town offices and boards — could impact the roles of the Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting, and the body of voters as a whole, so reviewing the manager's position opens the opportunity for a broader discussion.

Mahon last week — with the Board of Selectmen's approval — placed the discussion on the Town Meeting warrant. *The Advocate* would like to see free-flowing debate until Town Meeting to see what residents think of the way the current town manager position is set up, and if changes are needed.

Town Meeting floor may not be the most constructive place to hold this debate. The members could spend weeks on this issue alone. Instead of having an article this year, *The Advocate* urges more review before Town Meeting debates the issue.

A subcommittee could be set up to focus on the manager's position, with the goal of presenting proposed changes to Town Meeting in 2001.

There are some areas currently under the town manager's watch which might be better suited elsewhere.

According to the Town Report, here are the voters' authority and only a portion of each other position's responsibility:

Elected by Arlington voters: Board of Selectmen, moderator, town clerk, town treasurer, Board of Assessors, School Committee, and Arlington Housing Authority.

Appointed by the town moderator: Finance Committee, Minuteman Regional High School Committee representative, Long Range Financial Planning Committee, and the Noise Abatement Study Committee.

Appointed by the Board of Selectmen: town manager, comptroller, board administrator, Arlington Arts Council, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Registrars of Voters, Historic District Commission, and Fair Housing Advisory Committee.

Appointed by the town manager: town manager's office, legal counsel, Planning and Community Development director, director of police services, director of fire services, Department of Public Works director, personnel director, and Public Health director.

Appointed by the town manager subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen: Redevelopment Board, Board of Health, Parks and Recreation Commission, Board of Library Trustees, Historical Commission, Council on Aging, Conservation Commission, and Open Space Committee.

In addition, there are other committees which select members of other communities such as the Human Rights Commission, Permanent Town Building Committee, and Vision 2020 Standing Committee.

Performing the review of the manager's position now places the town in a difficult situation. There are many who might urge filling the job first, then defining the roles. A lengthy process is better than a hasty decision on Town Meeting floor. That haste could mean one committee or person gaining too much power.

In regards to hiring a new town manager, as long as the town tells candidates that the position could be altered in the future, there won't be any problems.

Arlington should open this discussion on the town manager's position and set a clear path for the future. This is a great opportunity for discussion that should bring a consensus about the role and responsibility of Arlington's key administrator for years to come.

GUESS WHICH PRACTICE HAS BEEN BANNED IN MASSACHUSETTS SINCE '62 AS UNHEALTHY ?



DAVE GRANLUND ©2000 METROWEST DAILY NEWS



Voters must take back the system

My brother-in-law Rob, who is a firefighter, insists that all elected officials are corrupt. In our running debates, I labor to convince him that many are people of considerable integrity who fight hard on behalf of those without power or influence.

I know this because I was fortunate to work for two such leaders as a Congressional legislative staffer in the 1980s — the late U.S. Representative Ted Weiss of New York and former U.S. Senator Tim Wirth of Colorado. My wife, Liz, worked for another exceptional leader, Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, when he was a member of the House. These are individuals with a highly developed sense of public service despite the many temptations and diversions.

When Rob criticizes the way politicians raise money to stay in public office, I have a harder time refuting his case, however. Our elected officials — and the people who challenge the incumbents — must compete in a perverse system in which money is the mother's milk. Far too much of that money is raised from lobbyists, corporations, and industries seeking to profit from their political contributions.

During my tenure as a Congressional aide, I was dismayed when it became apparent that some Members of Congress jockey for key Committee assignments and chairmanships — e.g. Banking and Finance, Energy and Commerce — in part because they are known to be rich in fundraising sources. Corporations and industry associations with business before these committees make it a practice to shower Committee members with tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions.

This is done without guile — brazenly and even proudly. As Congressional committees convene hearings or "mark-up" legis-

lation, those same lobbyist contributors are sitting in the audience's front row.

This unhealthy influence is at work in state government too. I recently looked at the 1998 campaign finance reports filed by one state Senator (available to the public from the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance). These records reveal that of the \$37,000 raised in the first 10 months of that year, almost 30 percent was contributed by registered lobbyists or business associations and their political action committees. Another 22 percent was raised from business owners or principals.

That's an alarming 50 percent of this incumbent's contributors who are lobbyists or business owners, probably most of whom have business before the legislature and committees on which he serves. After accounting for another 17 percent contributed by labor unions, the records show that only 34 percent of this incumbent's contributors during a campaign year came from individuals like you and me. (An even smaller percentage came from individuals within the incumbent's district.)

It comes down to this: If two-thirds of a legislator's contributions come from special interests, how can we be confident that 100 percent of his or her attention is devoted to the public interest?

Accepting money from registered lobbyists and corporate interests doesn't by itself corrupt a politician. Without question, though, it is the rich fertilizer which helps germinate and nurture corruption. The money buys access and favorable inclinations, and don't believe for a moment anyone who insists otherwise.

Too often that translates into influencing not just votes, but the hundred different ways in which a legislator can assist a patron: slipping an exemption from environmental laws into a major spending bill on behalf of a developer,

pressuring a state or federal regulator to back off investigating a company, or championing a business tax break. These are not favors generally available to you or me.

What's to be done about this problem?

The Clean Elections Law passed by statewide voter referendum in November 1998 was a good faith attempt to correct this unacceptable system. The best reform in this law, which will take effect for the 2002 election, is the creation of a system of public funding for candidates for state office who agree to observe spending limits. To qualify for public funds, a candidate must raise a minimum number of contributions from registered voters in her or his district (e.g. state Representative, 200 contributors from the district; state Senator, 450 contributors).

The law needs to be further fine-tuned, though. The caps on overall spending — \$90,000 for a state Senate race and \$30,000 for a House race — are by historical standards too low to give challengers a fair chance at defeating entrenched incumbents. Also, candidates already spend far too much of their time raising money. By reducing the maximum individual contribution to \$100 per candidate per election — down from the current limit of \$500 annually — the Clean Elections Law will have the unintended result of candidates devoting even more time in the pursuit of greenbacks.

The act of requiring lobbyists to register was itself an earlier reform, to bring into the sunshine the practice of financial contributions by these hired-hands with vested interests. But it is insufficient to prevent the disproportionate influence that such contributions can win.

Informed and active voters could set a new standard by which we expect candidates to voluntarily refuse to accept contributions from registered lobbyists or industry associations with business

before their committees. This will make candidates put much more effort into soliciting donations from citizens like you and me, and our response will have much to do with how well represented we feel.

It's time to be creative. What if:

- Elected officials only accepted requests to meet with registered lobbyists during the public office hours they hold in their district for their constituents, and made public on their web pages the names and affiliations of those with whom they are meeting. The voters could then judge whether citizens are receiving adequate access in comparison to paid lobbyists.

- Competing candidates voluntarily agreed to limit the percent of contributions they would accept from out of district?

- Reporting of contributions was required more frequently? Technology makes this easier today than when the disclosure laws first passed. Current law lets candidates not disclose their contributors' names and donation amounts until its too late to make an issue of it.

- Newspapers then printed this information the way Community Newspapers now print voting records?

More citizens like you and me started making (small) contributions to candidates we like as a counterweight to special interest cash? If we make enough noise, through letters, calls, emails, faxes to our elected officials — accompanied by a public dialogue through the Letters to the Editor columns, email list serves and internet chat rooms — we will get the attention of our elected officials. We can change the way money changes hands in campaigns and raise the standard of integrity to one of which we can be proud.

We might even start to win back the trust of disenfranchised people like Rob, my firefighter brother-in-law.

Kevin Knobloch is an Arlington resident.

Guest
ColumnistKEVIN
KNOBLOCH

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It is the goal of *The Arlington Advocate* to provide our readers with the highest quality local coverage they desire and need, in a newspaper that is accurate, timely and filled with an intimate and lively portrait of the community in which they live, work and play.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Column was sanctimonious

Selectman Charles Lyons' column of Jan. 13 ("We must work together to undo racism") reminds me of a conversation between two writers. One asks the other, "Have you ever heard me preach?" The other replies, "Have I ever heard you do anything else?"

The sanctimony from Selectman Lyons' exhortation on cultural diversity almost made me hang my head in shame for belonging to the white race.

The selectman preaches as if non-whites were some sort of pristine race, who, because of us bigoted whites, are being held prisoner in their racial and social chains.

Stop judging on skin color? Fine. Abolish affirmative action.

The selectman wants to bring more non-whites into our schools and neighborhoods and investigate treatment of non-whites

who do reside in Arlington. What is the rationale behind this? Except for some isolated incidents of racial discord, among school children, where is the racial disharmony in the town? Rest assured, there are enough local, state, and federal laws to counter any acts of racial discrimination — and I would suggest to Selectman Lyons before he takes Draconian measures that it might just be a bit premature to ask for federal troops.

The fact that the selectman raises such questions of unfair treatment toward non-whites suggests that he is not so much seeking to unite the races as to divide them, or: guilt-ridden whitey plays the race card.

Selectman Lyons encourages our young to know of other cultures. Fair enough. Let any Arlington student read the morning paper to get an education in diversity in Boston: countless shootings, stabbings, gang war-

fare, rapes, drug dealing, child neglect, complete breakdown of the school system, contempt for law, and ignorance of civilized behavior, 70 percent illegitimacy rate (at least one statistic the selectman failed to mention).

Though a semblance of the African-American community still exists, family life — and its attendant spiritual values — has all but vanished.

To state these facts is not racism, but reality. Like all social engineers, however, the selectman preaches from a high pulpit, admonishing us poor down-to-earth sinners.

When I see that Selectman Lyons — to demonstrate his faith in cultural diversity — has moved to, say, Roxbury, I'll cease to doubt his sincerity, though I'll most certainly question his sanity.

Ramon deRosa
SEE LETTERS, PAGE 6

What will the future bring for book lovers?

So I'm in the kitchen and I get to thinking about bookcases. Not in a "New Yankee Workshop" kind of way, just basic household organization.

My wife and I are expecting baby number three in March, and while we have plenty of room in the house (for now, we think) we're struggling with ways to keep the house from looking like it holds 17 kids and a pack of wild dogs. So we've been exploring shelving options for our books, the kids' books, the kids' games, the kids' plastic bins full of little plastic things that you can't quite believe they've accumulated in a few short years — you know, the usual stuff.

But this isn't really about bookcases. And it's not about kids and their stuff. (That's a topic for another day.) It's about the books on our shelves and the inevitable march toward our technological future. How's that for an intro?

I grew up, and remain to this day, an avid reader. As I'm sure you can imagine, I don't have much time to read any more but like I said, that's a topic for another day. Still, I have a pretty good collection of books. And as I was looking at my books, thinking about how to shelve them, I had a recurrence of a thought that I seem to remember thinking before.

Why do I keep all of these books? Do I keep them so that I can read them again? Unlikely, since I keep finding new books to read. Do I keep them so that I can lend them to my friends and family? Maybe, but only if I'm okay with the probability that they'll be long overdue when/if I remember to ask for them back. Aha! Now I'm on to something.

Why do I care about getting my books back? Here's a thought.

If you're at someone's house, and you don't know them particularly well, and you want to learn something about who they are, where they came from, what makes them tick, a bookshelf is a good place to start,

right? It's all right there. Favorite authors, old textbooks, guides to exotic places they've visited (or dreamed of visiting if only they could find someone to baby-sit for two weeks — alas, I'm back to a topic for another day). So, maybe my books are on shelves because they say something about who I am and how I want the world to see me. A book is an extension of you, so when it goes away, maybe never to return, a small part of you has gone with it.

Now please permit me to change course one more time, because I'm starting to sound like a bad self-help radio host. I'm a guy and a new gadget can get my attention.

Suddenly I'm reading stories and advertisements about large software companies joining forces with large on-line retailers to peddle the next generation of "books." I'm talking about electronic books. Downloadable. Searchable. With bookmarks that don't fall out. (I'll abstain from making a remark about small children and bookmarks.)

All packaged in a cool little gadget that no doubt, in a few short years, will do everything a real book can do and more. Except provide you with pages you can actually turn (though I've heard that's next). Imagine going to someone's house for a party, strolling through the living room innocently looking for some information about your hosts, and seeing a single, black, metallic, paper-back-sized device instead of a wall full of books. Yikes! Worse yet, imagine reading a favorite book to your child at bedtime and telling them they can "push that little button when I get to the bottom of the page." (And don't say they'd like it because it's like a GameBoy.)

What's it all mean? Maybe nothing, maybe just that parenthood makes you start to think random thoughts while standing in kitchens. But it does make you think. Will there be a day when we don't need bookshelves? Probably not (at least not for a while). But it sure would make my list of things to do a little shorter.

John Weiss is an Arlington resident.

Guest Columnist

JOHN WEISS

■ LETTERS, FROM PAGE 8

Questions letter writer

As an Asian American involved in an interracial marriage, I appreciated the paean to interracial harmony in the last paragraph of Mr. Harold Ramsey's latest letter to *The Advocate*.

I do ask him, however, to question his assumption about minority teachers. He writes: "So the avowed purpose of these meetings was not to hire the most qualified teachers, but to hire minority teachers. This would make Arlington schools like the schools in the cities out of which the students are bused out under METCO where academic standards are lower. . . ."

Relying on presumptions rather than empirical evidence, Mr. Ramsey states that hiring minority teachers would lower academic standards because he thinks they are less qualified. Do we have evidence supporting this among the pool of applicants for teaching jobs in Arlington?

Later in his letter he allows for the possibility that all the best qualified candidates are minorities, but as he clearly doesn't believe this, he himself admit that this is empty rhetoric on his part. Well, would hiring minorities lower academic standards?

I thought Ms. Christine Carney made it clear that academic standards would not be sacrificed, but Mr. Ramsey obviously has not been assured. So then, perhaps *The Advocate* could provide a series of articles addressing this question. Affirmative Action programs have been around long enough to provide some needed data. What do we mean by "most qualified" anyway? Scholastic achievement? Classroom experience? Special skills relating to children? What else? And how can we attract and retain more talented individuals in elementary and secondary education?

Perhaps if college graduates had reason to believe teachers had the prestige and potential earnings of doctors and lawyers, we would see more of them seeking careers in education rather than in medicine or law.

I also think the belief that hiring minority teachers primarily benefits minority students misses the point. Having a more diverse faculty would benefit all, especially students, toward the goal of E. pluribus unum. Our children would see minorities in positions of authority, respect, and even love. These teachers would not be distant minority superstar idols — like Michael Jordan to kids today or Hank Aaron to a previous generation — but would be interacting with our children on a daily basis.

My second-grader has come home on separate occasions telling me about friends saying they liked light-skinned blacks, but not dark-skinned blacks. Does the presence of a well-liked, light-skinned African American student in their class influence their thinking? I think it does.

My point isn't to propose we start classifying candidates according to gradation of skin color. Instead, I offer this anecdotal evidence to show that racism persists as a problem in our schools and community.

Our goal is to continue striving for a day

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

when the opinions of my daughter's friends would be as bizarre as if they declared they didn't like redheads. How do we get there? We must not be complacent: change doesn't occur with inaction. I thank Mr. Ramsey for opening a useful, very important dialogue. I hope it continues.

Naoko Shibusawa

Intersection suggestions

The left hand lane is marked with an arrow to go left.

The middle lane goes straight on Mass Avenue into Cambridge.

The right lane has no markings. I suggest that the right lane be marked with a combination arrow to go straight and to the right. This would allow traffic to go straight from two lanes, freeing some of the gigantic backup on the middle lane.

Also, if it could be managed, the lane markings on the Cambridge side of Mass Avenue could direct the Arlington Mass Avenue traffic to swerve to the left as it crosses Route 16. As it is now, many of the cars go directly from the left lane from the Arlington side of Mass Avenue straight through to the left lane on the Cambridge side. This would eliminate the ease in doing that.

Helen Krikorian

Appreciates police

A copy of this letter was sent to Fred Ryan, director of police services.

On the morning of Jan. 25 at 4:30 a.m. the Arlington police woke me with the news that my car had been stolen. Officer Brandon Kendall immediately drove me to neighboring Hillside Avenue where Officer James Curran had my car. Officer Curran had become suspicious and stopped the drivers, whereupon they leapt out and fled toward Route 2. The thieves had not even had time to rob the car of its contents, though they had flung everything about and put on a Celtic tape, showing their high spirits and good taste in music (see article in *The Advocate* for Jan. 27).

Within 20 minutes, Officer Richard Flynn returned with one of the young suspects whom he had captured. My car was then taken undamaged to police headquarters for fingerprinting and the suspect was arrested and held.

I cannot express enough my appreciation to these officers, including Officer Julianne Flaherty and the personnel mentioned in the Jan. 27 *Advocate* article, for the superb handling of this case while working through the night. My deepest thanks to them. We can be proud that the Arlington police department has such officers.

Grace Dingee

Thank you

On behalf of the Peirce School PTO, I heartily thank the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) for sponsoring our Pasta Dinner last Friday evening. It funded not only the bus service for our Boston families to and from school but also the meal itself.

Thanks to Stephen Pereira, Metco Director for Arlington, for making the arrangements. I also wish to express our gratitude to Rob Rice,

Director of Food Services, for cooking the tasty manicotti and meatball dinner, and providing at cost all the supplies. He knew just what we needed and how best to serve it and was so generous to contribute his time and expertise.

For the scrumptious and varied desserts, and for help with decorating, cooking and clean-up, I thank all my friends in the Peirce Community, but especially Marielle Davis, artist extraordinaire.

Thanks also to the colorful contributions from Anderson Florist, Arlington Florist, Cricket's Flowers, and Derby Farm, we had bouquets at every table.

Kate Cubeta

Tot Stop sends thanks

As Tot Stop celebrates its 10th anniversary of operation at the former Gibbs School this weekend, I would like to thank the hundreds of wonderful Arlington families we have had the pleasure of serving over the past decade. On Friday night and Saturday, Feb. 4 and 5, Tot Stop will host two kids' concerts, jugglers, musicians, and a few friendly characters. Please join us if you can! (Call 643-8687 for info).

At this time, I would like to publicly thank Alan McClennen, Jr. and the Arlington Redevelopment Board for their support. Special gratitude goes to Tot Stop's original co-founder, Michael Buonaio, for sharing the vision that made Tot Stop possible.

Each member of my immediate and extended family has played a part in keeping Tot Stop going. Thanks to my mother, Evelyn Conrade, for unwavering encouragement. Thank you, Kevin, for your mechanical mind! My daughter, Cathleen, at the age of 10 in 1990 spent countless hours drawing out the original plans with me (and is responsible for our big red barn). My daughters, Kim and Cavan (along with fellow AHS student Julia Wylie), prove every night that teenagers can be neat as they restore order out of the end-of-day chaos!

Manager Jim Ornstein has been an integral part of Tot Stop for nearly all of its years of operation. His loyalty, intelligence, sense of humor, and friendship are sincerely appreciated.

Final thanks to my current staff, Rosita, Josephine, and Ian, and to all my former employees, for being there with a smile. Your hard work has made each day a success.

As our first Tot Stop visitors now move through high school, we look forward to meeting the children of the new millennium for many years to come.

Carolyn Conrade Kenney
Tot Stop, Inc.

Padding needed

I am a third-grader at Dallin School. I go sledding and I think it can be dangerous if kids are walking up the middle of the hill. Also at Robbins Farm there is a yellow pole. If kids bump into it they could get badly hurt. I think somebody should put up padding on the pole. I hope this letter works. Thank you.

Ana Wolf

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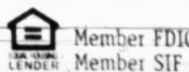
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Selectmen spar over Peirce Field lights

■ **PEIRCE** FROM PAGE 1
goad the state into withdrawing the funding. At that meeting, Marquis announced that the town had all it needed to start working on the project.

At a Nov. 1 meeting, Marquis announced that the town had picked Woburn-based Cruwys Electrical Contracting to do the work. He offered a tentative completion date of June 1.

A lot has transpired since then, he said Monday.

First, said Marquis on Monday, Cruwys ran into technical trouble excavating the plantings for the light poles. A second, larger problem presented itself soon after, he said, one that could not be discussed Monday during an open meeting.

For that reason, the whole argument proved difficult to settle publicly. The ostensible reason for the delay was the subject of an executive session, a closed meeting of the board to discuss possible litigation related to the field. Peirce field is edged to the north by a chunk

'The lights will be up at the appropriate time.'

TOWN MANAGER
DONALD MARQUIS

of land contaminated with chromium, the leavings of an old gasworks. It is the subject of a multi-year clean-up plan being developed among the town, the state Department of Environmental Protection, and several private companies.

When the project was discussed at the Nov. 1 selectmen's meeting, Marquis said the project schedule might be affected by the clean-up project.

After the executive session, Mahon said she accepted the need for a hold-up.

"It satisfied me to the extent that I see cause for the four-week delay," she said.

AHS hoop team forced to forfeit four games

■ **FORFEIT** FROM PAGE 1

loss records, forfeiting every game in which the student played that ended in a win. For the football team, that could mean its 7-3 record last season becomes an 0-10 record, though DeMatteo said the school was still trying to confirm that the student had played in every football game.

"We think it's all seven, but we're not positive," he said.

"As far as the football team goes, no one can take away on paper what they've accomplished on the field," he said.

The football team did not gain

any post-season awards for its performance, so the eligibility problem affects nothing more than the stat chart.

The forfeiture could hobble AHS's drive for post-season laurels on the basketball court, however. After beating Waltham Tuesday, the team has a win-loss record of 13-2. One of those games, a win, does not count for tournament play. Before the forfeiture, Arlington was assured a spot in the statewide, post-season tournament.

The win-loss stats for basketball will now be revised to 8-6, said McCarthy. Arlington needs to have

at least a .500 season to make the tournament, and there are six games left on the schedule. The basketball team must now win at least two more games to qualify. Assuming the team makes it to the tournament, its lower record will likely mean a tougher first-round game.

Monday night, McCarthy called a meeting of the basketball team and their parents to explain what had happened.

"I told the players that it was my mistake," he said. "The athlete involved had no wrong-doing."

"I've been a high-school principal for 17 years, and this is the first

forfeit [I recall] that has resulted in a transcript error of this sort."

"They certainly have pulled together," said DeMatteo of the basketball team. "They have a resolve to do the best they can. In my eyes, this doesn't diminish their season."

If there is a silver lining, said McCarthy, it is that the school caught the problem before the end of the season.

"In that regard, we're fortunate," he said. "If he had played in all of the games, we would be sitting here with an 0-14 record, with no likelihood of review."

Mugar discussing office buildings for Rte. 2 site

■ **MUGAR** FROM PAGE 1

wish would end, in victory of course. It's essentially a piece of land... that should just be left the way it is."

In addition to getting a permit to enter the site from Route 2, the project would also have to receive permits from three town boards: the Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and the Redevelopment Board.

If the developer proceeds with the plan shown to McClellan

and Marquis, it would be slightly smaller than an office complex proposed for the site in the early 1980s. That 375,000-square-foot project ran into opposition, first from Arlington's Conservation Commission, then from subsequent legal challenges and ultimately from an inability to get the state to allow access from Route 2.

A telephone inquiry by *The Advocate* to Mugar Enterprises was not returned before the deadline for this edition.

Work could affect water

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority will be conducting regular valve exercising starting next week that has the possibility to cause temporary water discoloration in some parts of Arlington. This work will take place at the following locations:

Meter 86, located on Park Avenue at Prospect Avenue.

Meter 12, located on Eastern Avenue at Highland Avenue.

Meter 128, located on Park

Avenue at Paul Revere Road.

Meter 135, located on Forest Street at Aerial Road.

Meter 171, located on Broadway at Palmer Road.

Valve exercising is performed annually to ensure that critical valves will function when needed and to effect any needed repairs that might be identified during the process. Any water discoloration could persist for up to three days after completion of the work.

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Ending Thursday, Feb. 3

• ANY GIVEN SUNDAY (R) 12:55, 4:15, 7:40
• DOGMA (R) 4:40, 7:15, 9:50
• AMERICAN BEAUTY (R) 2:20, 5:00, 7:25, 9:55

Friday, Feb. 4
• TUMBLEWEEDS (PG13) 1:30, 3:30, 5:35, 7:45, 10:00
• ANNA AND THE KING (PG13) 2:45, 5:45, 8:44
• THE SIXTH SENSE (PG13) 5:15, 7:30, 10:00
• SWEET AND LOWDOWN (PG13) 1:35, 3:35, 5:40, 7:50, 10:05
• BICENTENNIAL MAN (PG) 2:00
• MANSFIELD PARK (PG13) 2:05, 4:55, 7:20, 9:40
• BEING JOHN MALKOVICH (R) 4:45, 7:05, 9:30
• POKEMON: THE FIRST MOVIE (G) 1:20, 3:15

Saturday & Sunday, Feb. 5 & 6
• TUMBLEWEEDS (PG13) 1:30, 3:30, 5:35, 7:45, 10:00
• ANNA AND THE KING (PG13) 2:45, 5:45, 8:44
• THE SIXTH SENSE (PG13) 5:15, 7:30, 10:00
• SWEET AND LOWDOWN (PG13) 1:35, 3:35, 5:40, 7:50, 10:05
• BICENTENNIAL MAN (PG) 2:00
• MANSFIELD PARK (PG13) 2:05, 4:55, 7:20, 9:40
• BEING JOHN MALKOVICH (R) 4:45, 7:05, 9:30
• POKEMON: THE FIRST MOVIE (G) 1:20, 3:15

Monday through Thursday, Feb. 7-Feb. 10
• TUMBLEWEEDS (PG13) 1:30, 3:30, 5:35, 7:45, 10:00
• ANNA AND THE KING (PG13) 2:45, 5:45, 8:44
• THE SIXTH SENSE (PG13) 5:15, 7:30, 10:00
• SWEET AND LOWDOWN (PG13) 1:35, 3:35, 5:40, 7:50, 10:05
• BICENTENNIAL MAN (PG) 2:00
• MANSFIELD PARK (PG13) 2:05, 4:55, 7:20, 9:40
• BEING JOHN MALKOVICH (R) 4:45, 7:05, 9:30
• POKEMON: THE FIRST MOVIE (G) 1:20, 3:15

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Arlington High School will distribute report cards the week of Feb. 14.

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